



March 2022

Dear Constituent,

Thank you for contacting me about workforce planning and the Health and Care Bill. Our NHS relies on effective workforce planning, to ensure we can meet the health and care needs of local communities. I applaud the dedication of healthcare professionals across a range of professions, in particular during the last few years.

Clause 35 of the Health and Care Bill would require the production of a workforce accountability report at least every five years. This report will increase transparency and accountability in the workforce planning process. For example, the report would set out the role and responsibilities of new Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) about how they would ensure the delivery of effective local and national workforce planning.

I recognise that people would like to go further, but there is common ground on the need to have effective workforce planning.

As my colleague Ed Argar MP, the Minister for Health, has stated, we cannot predict all future workforce needs, which is why the report is required to be published at a minimum of every five years.

This flexibility will allow an updated report to be provided earlier than the statutory required period to reflect any changes to roles and responsibilities.

I also recognise the level of support an amendment made to the Bill in the House of Lords has received from Peers, patient groups and professional bodies. I look forward to giving further consideration to workforce planning when the Bill returns to the House of Commons later this month.

It should be kept in mind that in addition to Government measures in the Bill, the Department for Health and Social Care has already commissioned the development of a long-term 15-year strategic framework for the health and social care workforce. This is a welcome piece of work and I look forward to its publication, which I am told is expected later this year.

It is vital that workforce planning is closely integrated to the wider planning across health and social care. Two key NHS bodies will be merged to help put long-term planning and strategy for healthcare staff recruitment and retention at the forefront of the national NHS agenda.

The Government is delivering against its key pledges to increase the numbers of GPs and nurses - there are 1,200 more GPs and 27,000 more nurses compared to 2019.



**Chris Heaton-Harris**

Member of Parliament for Daventry  
House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA  
Tel: 020 7219 7048

Clause 157 of the Health and Care Bill is designed to provide more flexibility to the regulation of healthcare professionals so that it can change to better support patients, support our health and care services and help the workforce meet future challenges. Health and care professionals are regulated on a UK-wide basis, and it is important that there are consistent standards to allow the flexibility for healthcare professionals to be able to work across the UK. The case for reforming professional regulation has long been acknowledged by bodies representing healthcare professionals. The existence of nine separate professional regulatory bodies is inefficient and confusing to patients. A consultation on the regulation of healthcare professionals is taking place and is due to conclude on the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022.

I believe that the measures in the Health and Care Bill will help to clarify who is responsible for workforce planning and ensure NHS can provide the workforce needed to meet the health and care needs of the population.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Chris'.

**CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP  
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR DAVENTRY**